

THE
Anti-Slavery Reporter

PUBLISHED UNDER THE SANCTION OF THE

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

Series 4.
Vol. XXVIII., No. 4.

AUGUST-OCTOBER, 1908.

{ Gratis to
Subscribers.

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PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICES OF THE SOCIETY,
51, DENISON HOUSE, VAUXHALL BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON, S.W.

NEWNHAM, COWELL & GRIPPER, LTD., Printers, 75, Chiswell Street, London, E.C.

1908.

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[*The Editor, whilst grateful to all correspondents who may be kind enough to furnish him with information, desires to state that he is not responsible for the views stated by them, nor for quotations which may be inserted from other journals. The object of the REPORTER is to spread information, and articles are necessarily quoted which may contain views or statements for which their authors can alone be held responsible.]*

Slave Labour in Portuguese West Africa.

FURTHER information of a confidential character regarding the investigation which is being carried on by Captain Paula Cid on behalf of the Portuguese Government has been received by the Society from the Foreign Office.

As regards the so-called recruitment of *serviças* in Angola, several extracts from recent letters of missionaries in the country have been sent to us, which point to an active trade going on in men and women, in the face of which it is obviously inadequate for the Portuguese authorities to speak of remedying "any defects which may have arisen in connection with the recruitment of labour in the interior," for the whole existing system is utterly bad.

The first extracts quoted are from missionaries at three stations:—

(1.) 16th May, 1908. "Much slave catching going on."

(2.) 28th May, 1908. (After naming the great fall in rubber.) "I know that there is not the usual ambition to go to the interior this year, as formerly. However, quite a number are going, but it is well understood that their trade is for slaves. Slavery seems to be reviving all about us. They are brought to the white traders and sold quite openly. We hear that it is also done openly at Benguela. And not only that, but there are marauding parties out all night catching whom they can."

(3.) 15th May, 1908, reports an instance of this. One man was caught so engaged at the village, and next day taken to the fort, where he was put in prison to await return of the absent Chefe.

What follows is quoted from letters from missionaries in Bibé at two stations, 25 miles apart.

(1.) 1st June, 1908. "The whole country is in a state of fear on account of man-stealers. Women are escorted by men to and from their fields; care is taken to wait until the sun is high up before leaving the villages, and they get back early in the afternoon."

(2.) 6th June, 1908. "Slave trade has again revived. People cannot go out alone far from home without great danger of being seized by brigands and sold to whites" (Portuguese traders).

There appears to be an impression in some quarters that Great Britain has no special responsibility or right to protest to Portugal against slave labour and slave-dealing in her West African dominions, and this idea may have been unfortunately encouraged by a remark recently made by Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons in reply to questions, that he imagined that our status in this matter arose out of the Brussels Convention; then, in reply to a plain question by Mr. Byles as to whether we had any convention or agreement with Portugal entitling us to watch the interests of the natives, the Foreign Secretary said that he did not know of any special obligation. This answer must have been given in inadvertence, as little more than a year ago Sir Edward Grey answered a question put by the same member (Mr. Byles) on the subject, in the following terms:—

" . . . In 1815, by the Convention of 21st January, a sum of £300,000 was paid to Portugal in discharge of claims for Portuguese ships detained by British cruisers previously to the 1st of June, 1814, on the ground that they were engaged in illegal slave trade. And on 22nd January of the same year, a treaty was concluded with Portugal, by which the Portuguese slave trade in all parts of Africa north of the Equator was declared to be thenceforward illegal. In this treaty, Portugal also engaged to determine by a subsequent treaty the period at which the Portuguese slave trade should cease universally. Great Britain, on her side, remitted in favour of Portugal the whole of what remained, amounting to £480,000, due to Great Britain out of a loan of £600,000, raised in 1809 for the service of Portugal."

The reply went on to refer to the Ashburton Treaty of 1842, between Great Britain and Portugal, whereby the slave trade was described as an "infamous and piratical practice," and declared to be "a strictly prohibited and highly penal crime," and provision accordingly was made for its suppression. A Decree of the Queen of Portugal followed this Treaty, declaring the slave traffic to be piracy.

The "subsequent treaty" mentioned in Sir Edward Grey's answer was concluded in 1858, whereby slavery was declared to be abolished at the end of 20 years, and accordingly, on April 29th, 1878, "slavery ceased by law throughout the dominions of Portugal."

In the discussion in the House of Commons on the Foreign Office Vote, at the end of last Session, Sir Charles Dilke, after speaking on the Congo Question, referred to the slave raids, captures, and slave dealing carried on by thousands of the revolted troops in the interior of the Congo State, and to the stream of slaves continually passing to the Islands of San Thomé and Principe. Convicts also, he said, were sent to serve their sentences in the islands :—

"The slave trade was carried on by the Portuguese Government, and the report which Mr. Burt had made upon the subject had been toned down for publication. They had been told that the Government were giving anxious consideration to this subject, and that communications had been made with the Portuguese Government with regard to it. A Captain Francisco Paula Cid, who had been formerly a governor of the territory, it was said, had been sent to report upon the whole matter. He thought that this excrescence on the Congo, which was notoriously continuing to the present time, was a matter which required more rapid attention than the Government had yet given to it. They had allowed themselves to be put off with promises; those promises had not been kept any more than those which had been given by the Belgian Government."

Sir Edward Grey, replying, said :—

"I can say little about the Portuguese Question. We have brought all the information at our disposal before the Portuguese Government, and urged them to do all in their power, and with as little delay as possible, to put things into a satisfactory condition. Of course, anyone who reflects on the internal troubles of Portugal will realise that the time has not been a fortunate one for undertaking reforms in Portuguese territory."

CONFERENCE ON THE QUESTION.

The Conference which has been arranged by the Anti-Slavery Society for the discussion of the question of Portuguese slave labour in Angola and the Islands of San Thomé and Principe, will take place on Thursday afternoon, October 22nd, at the Westminster Palace Hotel. The chair will be taken at 4 o'clock by the Rt. Hon. Lord Monkswell. Considerable interest has been shown in the objects of the Conference by those with whom we have been in communication, and a large and representative gathering is expected, including members of Parliament and delegates from missionary and other religious and philanthropic bodies.

The Congo Question.

THE correspondence between our Government and that of Belgium which has been published in previous Parliamentary Papers is continued in the White Paper* issued at the beginning of August. Sir Edward Grey insisted in the first despatch, dated June 23rd, and he repeated the assurance in the House of Commons a month later, that the British Government must reserve their liberty to raise more definite points on the Belgian annexation question later on, and that they must not be regarded as committed to any final decision until the whole question had been seriously considered by the Government. In a Memorandum of the same date, our Government welcomed the assurances of the Belgian Government as to retaining complete control over the Congo and doing away with compulsion, as well as their determination to obtain an immediate improvement in the natives' conditions of existence, and to extend their economic liberty. In an important passage the Government declare :—

“They recognise, after a full consideration of the Memorandum presented on the 25th April by Count de Lalaing, the difficulty of insisting upon the total abolition at a definite date of a labour tax in any form, and they do not desire to press for the fixing of such a date, provided the measures necessary for remedying the abuses which still exist in the Congo State, more especially in respect of the treatment of the natives, are taken without delay, and that existing or future Concessions are interpreted in such a way as to recognise the extended rights of occupation of the native population and their freedom to dispose of the natural products of the soil already referred to.”

A formal assurance, however, was invited from the Belgian Government that they would not refuse to refer to arbitration any differences of view in the commercial articles of the treaties, and “some definite statement, as distinct from general assurances, of the measures they propose to take to give effect to their intention to respect the Treaty rights” was asked for. In their Memorandum of July 12th, the Belgian Government repeat their general assurances as to improving the lot of the Congo natives, and declare that they will carry out the Reform Decrees of 1906 by making an increased grant of land to the natives; to this end an enquiry is to be held in all villages for fixing sites to be reserved for the inhabitants, and the new administration “will expedite the work of this enquiry so as to make it give the expected results as quickly as possible.” The right of the natives to dispose of the products of the soil assigned to them is also to be respected. The Memorandum also pointed out some

* Cd. 4,178.

objections to resorting to arbitration, which it declared could only be done by the consent of Parliament, and suggested that a better method of settling disputes would be a direct understanding between all the Powers having possessions in the Conventional Basin. In his covering letter, the Belgian Foreign Minister haggled over the interpretation of Article 34 of the Berlin Act (as to notifying to the Powers the taking possession of territory in Africa), and asserted that annexation could not interfere with British interests. The Congo State had, he said, always been regarded as a future Belgian Colony. On this we may remark that the Congo Government has again and again insisted on the independence of the State and on its being an entity distinct from Belgium. In 1879 Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry M.) Stanley, writing to Colonel Strachan in the early days of the "International Association of the Congo," said:—

"You say 'This project is not to create a Belgian Colony, but to establish a powerful negro State.' I understand that there is no intention to establish a Belgian Colony."

M. Davignon expressed himself as feeling convinced that England would accept the transfer of the Congo to Belgium without any reservations.

We can only express the hope and belief that M. Davignon's conviction is groundless, for the assurances of the Belgian Government must be regarded as nebulous and wholly inadequate. The Congo Reform Association has addressed a memorial to the Secretary of State, pointing out once more that the fundamental basis of any real reform must be the recognition of communal native rights to the land and its produce; the entire territory must, in accordance with Treaty obligations, be thrown open to commerce with the outer world, and the Government must renounce those exclusive rights of appropriation of the land which underlie its whole conception of administration, and involve the enslavement of the native races.

The "enquiry" which the Belgian Government propose to hold in every village for delimitation is an enormous task, which would occupy an indefinite time, and may postpone a settlement to the Greek Kalends. As regards the Colonial Law, which has been considered by the Chamber, the *Times* correspondent at Brussels has pointed out that, apart from general assurances of benevolent intentions, there is very little in it about the natives, and the provision for the retention of the existing *personnel* leaves little hope of radical change.

The debates in the House of Commons at the end of July produced speeches of importance from Sir Charles Dilke, Lord Percy, Sir George

White, and others. Sir Edward Grey, after pointing out that the papers to be published must be regarded as incomplete, referred to the question of forced labour, and said:—

"It is essential, without delay, that the natives should be put into possession of large tracts of territory, which will enable them to cultivate and to feed themselves and to trade, otherwise they would have no means of obtaining a livelihood. These tracts must come out of the *concessionnaire* area where there are natives in the *concessionnaire* area. The question of forced labour and the treatment of natives is one which I regard as an axiom in the eyes of any civilised State.

"It goes without saying that the native must have the lands of which he has been in occupation, and freedom to trade in those lands."

Sir George White dwelt upon the retrograde character of the Belgian debates, and pleaded for some assurance that Sir E. Grey would take a firm and consistent attitude in regard to this matter. They had no sign whatever that the Belgian Government acknowledged the rights of natives in the land or that they would be allowed to trade.

In his reply, the Foreign Secretary said that before any final decision was reached the views of the United States must be taken into consideration, and his Majesty's Government would seriously consider the whole question.

Since that time Annexation has passed the Belgian Chamber, and the question is: What will be the next step of our Government?



The Slave Trade into Tripoli.

We learn from the Italian Anti-Slavery Society that their agent at Benghazi fully confirms his reports of slave-trading in the province which were given in a previous issue. It will be remembered that some of these were traversed by the British Consul-General at Tripoli.

The Secretary of the Italian Society informs us that private communications were sent to the Brussels Conference on Arms about the slavery at Benghazi, with lists for one year of the caravans of slaves brought in and of Turkish boats which took slaves from that port. Particulars are given, with dates, of 40 caravans of slaves brought from the interior, and of 12 vessels which left carrying slave children mostly for Constantinople.

The Race Problem in the United States.

THE newspapers have within the last few weeks reported quite a series of lynchings of negroes in different Southern States with the usual horrible accompaniments of revolting brutality and sensationalism. Among many other cases which have occurred in Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, etc., one of the worst is that reported in July from Greenville, Texas, when a negro boy of 18, accused of assault, was burned at the stake in the public square. Shops were closed, and crowds of people flocked to the place to the number, according to the *Houston Daily Post*, of over 5,000, to see the sight. The victim and the faggots were soaked in kerosene oil and the negro slowly burned to death.

Well may the American papers write of the "lynch-lust!"

There have been repeated affrays in Texas and in Florida, and anything like punishment of the lynchers appears to be impossible. The *Daily News* correspondent at New Orleans wrote in August of "a lynching mania sweeping over the Southern States," eleven negroes having been thus done to death within eight days, "many of them merely on suspicion." A correspondent in the South writes—and we notice that this is confirmed by the *Times* correspondent at Washington—that "such things (as lynchings) are so common that no attention whatever is paid to them"; and she adds that it is only by constantly reading the Southern papers that one can obtain an adequate idea of the real position.

More serious still, because of its locality, was the race riot in August, arising out of the attempt to lynch two negroes in the town of Springfield, Illinois, the birth-place and home of Abraham Lincoln, which, in the words of the *Times* correspondent, "for gratuitous brutality surpasses any racial clashes of recent years." The mob, unsuccessful in the attempt to get hold of two negroes in gaol, took to destroying property in mad fury, and, the military having been called out, five men were killed and twenty wounded in the riot. The mob then rushed to the negro quarter, whence the negroes had all precipitately fled, but at last two perfectly innocent men were found and lynched, and it was only by a determined bayonet-charge that the mob was finally dispersed. The *Washington Times* declared that the anti-negro prejudice is so strong that it is "the fixed determination of a large portion of the white population of Springfield to banish the negro from the city for ever." Dr. Booker Washington, that earnest champion of his race, who always speaks with caution, commenting on these outbursts of racial hate, said:—

"Within the past 60 days 25 negroes have been lynched in different parts of the United States. Of this number only four of the 25 were even charged with criminal assault upon women. How long can our Christian

civilisation stand this? I am making no special plea for the negro, innocent or guilty, but I am calling attention to the danger that threatens our civilisation. . . .

"Mob justice undermines the very foundation upon which our civilisation rests, viz., respect for the law and confidence of its security."

The remedies to which Dr. Washington points are that all should unite in a firm effort to enforce the law, and to rid the community of the vicious and gambling element who furnish "powder for these explosions." He does not relinquish his hopeful, and even optimistic, view of the future of the negro.

"We must keep our hopefulness," he said in an address not long ago to Hampton students. "Here and there throughout the South are things that bring the greatest amount of hope and encouragement. It seems to me that one of the greatest evils that could befall our people at the present time would be to have any large proportion of them suffer themselves to grow embittered, to learn to hate the people of any other race, to cherish hatred in their hearts because of what people do to them."

A significant meeting was held in New York last winter to plead the cause of the coloured people, in which many well-known public men took part. It was pointed out that the material condition of the negro in the States was improving, and that he already paid taxes on over £70,000,000 worth of property. Mr. Henry Watterson spoke of the remarkable progress from darkness to light which he had witnessed in the districts of the South, where the negro had had "a decent opportunity of self-improvement."

But these opportunities are too often lacking in the Southern States.

"It is hardly considered respectable in the south to-day," wrote the organ of the Hampton Institute recently, "to have anything to do with negro education. There are certain Southern men connected with the negro work whose lives are a continual martyrdom. . . . There are men and women in almost every Southern city engaged in negro work who would not be more completely tabooed if they suffered from the leprosy."

Dr. Booker Washington states that two shillings is spent in the South on the education of coloured children to every pound spent on white children in the North. A prominent Southerner in Georgia is reported to have declared that 95 per cent. of the white people of his city were opposed to the education of the negro, fearing the demand for social equality. The alternative is that he must be reduced to practical slavery.

In view of the recent violent manifestations of race-hatred which have occurred, all the courage, patience, and determination of Booker Washington and those enlightened men of influence, both in South and North, who are backing up the cause of the coloured people (it is said in increasing

numbers), will be needed to oppose the dead weight of prejudice and bitterness arrayed against them.

As regards the Convict-leasing system, the outlook appears to be certainly more hopeful, for the cruelties practised in the Southern States have been coming more and more to light, and in Georgia decisive action has been taken to put an end to the system.

The Administration has been steadily and quietly carrying on its campaign against peonage, and the Assistant Attorney General has discovered conditions which are described as being "abhorrent to civilisation"—the confinement of men in camps, where they have been badly fed, maltreated, beaten, and even killed, and other conditions which are said to compare with those which existed in the most brutal slave-holding communities before the war. In Newnan, Georgia, this official found some of "the best people in the State" holding Germans in a state of peonage; in Knoxville, Tennessee, he found negroes held in slavery and brutally beaten by foremen at railroad construction camps in remote and isolated districts.

"Both in Alabama and Florida," he wrote, "the brutality of the foremen of white labourers lacked none of the picturesque accessories of peonage, guns, dogs to chase the escaping slaves, whippings, etc."

A similar description is given of the peonage as he found it existing in North Carolina.

The Atlanta Press states that the State of Georgia has been deluged with glaring accounts of the incompetency of the Prison Commission, which has had the power of life and death over thousands of human beings, and which has been practically controlled by one man, who has "grown rich on the spoils," for many years.

The Joint Committee, which has been sitting to investigate the question, issued at the end of August last an important Report, in which they condemned the State Prison Commission for grave neglect of duty, holding them largely and directly responsible for the abuses of the system. They found the charges of cruelty, excessive whipping, etc., of the prisoners to be well established, and a general system of "virtual if unconscious or unintentional bribery" to have been carried on by the warders, who have trafficked in the convicts and made a profit out of the sub-leasing, being directly in the pay of the lessees. "No excuse," said the Report, "could palliate the conduct of the State officials," and the ignorance of the Prison Commission of all that was going on is censured in severe terms, for proper personal inspection would have speedily revealed the truth. The condition of the illegal Misdemeanour or "Wild Cat" camps is described as "a disgrace to a civilised people," the convicts being "illegally sold into

worse than slavery." Government officials were party to this cruel and illegal labour, some of which is said to be "barbaric."

The Governor of Georgia, in a message to the Assembly at the end of August, declared that the leasing of convicts should cease at once by constitutional amendment, the time being singularly opportune for this reform. Bills were brought before a specially-called session of the Legislature to cure the abuses, and for a time a conflict between the two branches of the Legislature caused a deadlock. But we learn from the correspondent of *The Times*, on September 22nd, that a Bill has now been passed prohibiting the leasing of felons except by consent of the Governor and the Prison Commission.

"So far," he wrote, "as its terms are understood, the effect of the Bill is the elimination of the private contractor and the restriction of Convict-leasing to county and municipal authorities."

Native Labour in British East Africa.

CORRESPONDENCE was published in a White Paper in July last* regarding the proceedings which led to the suspension from their offices of two of the members of the Legislative Council of the Protectorate, Lord Delamere and Mr. Baillie.

On March 23rd an irregular demonstration took place outside the Governor's house at Nairobi, following a meeting which had been called by the Governor to discuss the labour question with the colonists, who asked for the immediate withdrawal of the existing native labour rules, the appointment of a new Native Commissioner, and other points. The settlers complained that the Government had given the natives the impression that they need not work for white men, and that they unduly favoured the natives as against the settlers, not helping the latter to obtain labour. The Governor assured the meeting that the Government was sympathetic, but that while they wished to educate the natives to the advantages of work they could not resort to compulsion; he declined to withdraw the labour rules. In consequence of this reply the demonstration referred to took place outside the Governor's house, to press their demands further, when Lord Delamere and Mr. Baillie were prominent among the crowd and acted in what the Governor considered an improperly aggressive way.

In his letter to the Secretary of State the Governor stated that there had been a serious falling off in the labour supply from various causes (certain proceedings of the chiefs having been stopped as being little short of forced labour), and many of the poorer settlers had suffered seriously.

The labour rules were not meant to interfere with the private recruiting of labour, but they did tend to operate hardly in some cases, though not to the extent alleged.

We are glad to note the unambiguous language of the Imperial Government in reference to this subject of forced labour. Speaking on these incidents in British East Africa, Colonel Seely said in the House of Commons on the 28th May :—

" His Majesty's Government proposed to support the Governor of East Africa to the full. They thought the action he took was perfectly right and correct. They were determined that nothing like forced labour should exist with their consent in any part of the British Empire. They did not think that either of the members of the Legislative Council who were suspended would themselves wish to employ a system of forced labour; but there was no doubt that some of the proposals which they urged before the Governor would, in fact, have had their result, and, therefore, the Government were of opinion that the Governor acted rightly, and they proposed to support him to the full."

Later on in the same speech, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies said that they must make it quite plain that we were in East Africa and elsewhere not only for the good of the white settlers, but for the good of the natives.

They " heartily re-echoed the aspiration that no further alienation of Native Reserves might take place, and they knew from the Governor that no such step would be taken, realizing, as they did, that it was their country, that we had already taken too much of it, that alienation caused unrest, and that there was plenty of room for all in that country. . . . The Government did not lose sight of the fact that this House was primarily responsible for the unrepresented native races. The Government must work as far as possible in co-operation with our fellow-countrymen across the sea, and they had every confidence that those fellow-countrymen were growing in sympathy with the views entertained at home."

German East Africa.

A DEBATE which took place not long since in the German Reichstag was noteworthy for the views expressed on the native labour question and the use of force to induce the natives to work. General von Liebert, a former Governor of German East Africa, declared that most negroes were lazy, and while they should be treated properly, it was Utopian to "construct an economic future" out of them; the hut tax should be increased to make them work. He begged the Minister to "alter his programme in the direction of less enthusiasm for the negroes' capabilities for work."

Herr Dernburg, the Colonial Secretary, who recently visited East Africa, would not admit that the natives in general were lazy.

"The fact that they did not produce much yet was due to the difficulties of finding markets, chiefly through the lack of means of communication. Where properly managed, negroes had proved themselves to be willing and capable of work, and there was no lack of labourers."

The system of engaging workers, he continued, must be regulated, and an end must be put to present methods. Reports he had received from the Colony showed that natives were in many cases forced to work and plundered, and that the procedure employed towards them differed but slightly from the slave hunts in the Congo. The reason why many planters could not obtain workers, he stated, was that they treated the negro so badly. Plantations were chiefly speculative concerns, in which no consideration was paid to workmen. The Association of Planters on Kilimandjaro went so far as to demand that natives should be forbidden to lay out plantations of their own, and in other cases a demand was made that natives should be prohibited from doing any work at all for themselves, in order that their services might be at the constant disposal of the planters. The object of some of the planters seemed to be, he continued, to prevent utterly the civilisation of negroes. He did not esteem the interests of the planters lightly, but they must not believe that theirs were the only interests to be considered."

Speaking on another occasion in the Reichstag, Herr Dernburg spoke equally strongly on the same subject.

He said that

"His travels in the protectorate had convinced him that the rights of the natives must be safeguarded in every respect, and that the colony would thrive only through the co-operation of Whites with natives. He pointed out that the brutal development of force as advocated by some writers, would be fatal if only in view of the circumstance that the Government was faced by 4,000,000 men, at least 400,000 of whom were warriors. If the proposals of the German planters were accepted an insurrection would undoubtedly be the result. It must be the endeavour of the Government to obtain the confidence of the Blacks, and he shewed that it was impossible to induce natives to work on farms and plantations if the right of the employer to chastise them was maintained in its present form. He advocated the appointment of Labour Commissioners to mediate between employers and employed. . . ."

As regards the alleged laziness of the negroes, the Minister said that their psychological and physical possibilities ought to be studied, and he deprecated the "gentle pressure" which was often advocated. Compulsion in any form was still compulsion; when the negro saw that his work would really benefit him he would be ready to work.

The demand for raising the hut tax from three to twelve rupees Herr Dernburg stigmatized as ridiculous.

Native Administration in French West Africa.

WE have more than once had occasion to refer to the difference which exists between the principles of administration of the French Congo and the rest of the French Colonies in West Africa. The contrast is emphasised when we read the excellent principles of French Colonial policy, laid down in a Report by the British Minister at Paris, which was issued this year as a White Paper.* The Report told us that the striking feature of recent French Colonial policy was the substitution of a policy of "association" for that of "domination" and "assimilation." The old policy is said to have resulted in disregard of the special needs of each particular Colony through love of uniformity, and in the imposition of rules and methods on long-established organisations in a sometimes brutal spirit of domination, whereby feelings of hatred and revolt were aroused. The object of the French Government should be to further the moral and economic evolution of the native populations, "seeing that the best way to get value out of a Colony is to enrich the natives who inhabit it."

We may also cite, in confirmation, a very recent report of the Governor of French West Africa, to the effect that the suppression of native domestic slavery has in no way hindered the agricultural development of the country, as had been feared by some. On the contrary, a better division of labour has been brought about by the free contract system, which has led to increased production, and the formation of a new class of free and regularly paid labourers.

During the last few years attention has, we are told, been directed very largely to native policy, and M. Clémentel, when Colonial Minister, laid down principles directing absolute respect for the native's individuality and for his property, the preservation and development of the race, and for education. The first of these recommendations is explained to have been "rendered necessary by the regrettable incidents in the French Congo, which were brought to light at the beginning of the year 1905."

The introduction of a more suitable fiscal system has become necessary because of difficulties which have "already risen with the natives of certain Colonies in connection with the creation of monopolies, a form of fiscal procedure which they cannot understand."

This also, evidently refers to the French Congo, and a special section is devoted to this Colony. Its administrative and economic system was entirely re-organised in 1906 in consequence of the acts of cruelty

* Cd. 3883.

to natives committed by two officials, MM. Toqué and Gaud. M. Savorgnan de Brazza was then sent out on his mission of investigation, but died on his way home. Much excitement was caused by the publication of some of de Brazza's papers, and a Committee was appointed to examine and report. The Minister of the Colonies, M. Clémentel, declared that "the only remedy lay in a thorough reform of the whole organisation and administration of the Colony." A decree was submitted, the object of which was declared to be the creation of a more centralised system of control and a better administration. In it the question of the Concessionaire Companies was dealt with, and their position and duties clearly defined. A far more vigorous system of control was imposed, especially in regard to the employment of native labour and the re-planting of rubber trees. Rules were laid down for the administration of justice, the treatment of the natives, the limitation of human portage, the payment of the poll-tax by better methods, and in money rather than in labour or kind.

This last point has been emphasised by M. Challaye, who, together with other representative Frenchmen, has formed a French Branch of the International League for the defence of natives in the Congo Basin.

"If," he wrote, "the Companies are left free to pay in money or in goods, the result is the oppression of the blacks, who are compelled to accept, in exchange for rubber valued at a ludicrously low price, goods valued at an exorbitant price. The obligation to pay in money would represent a decisive advance towards real liberty and true justice."

M. Challaye urged the Ministry to publish the Brazza Mission Reports, and the whole Reports of the Lanessan Commission.

While the concession system is carried on, scandals in French Congo will not cease. Not long ago, a European agent of one of the Companies was (according to the Brazzaville correspondent of *Le Temps*) arrested for tying the hands of a native so tightly together that gangrene set in and *the hands fell off*. The accused man was fined sixteen francs by the Brazzaville Court for the offence! Another judgment of the same Court has been chronicled by *Le Temps*, when four European Concessionaire agents were charged with complicity in murders by armed native agents and the imprisonment of women as hostages. Two of the accused committed suicide before the trial; the other two were acquitted, while the native employés were condemned to various terms of forced labour and imprisonment.

It seems clear that very much still needs to be done in the way of reforming the organisation and administration of the Colony of the French Congo.

Forced Labour in Papua.

THE Legislative Council of Papua is reported to have passed an Ordinance "to encourage the natives in habits of industry," which compels landless natives to work on the Government plantations for a month every year without pay, or, in default, to undergo six months' imprisonment.

The Bishop of New Guinea has stated in an interview that there is great agitation in British New Guinea owing to scarcity of labour, and the white men who are developing the country cannot get enough for their requirements; hence this Bill, which is reserved for the Governor-General's assent. The Bishop observes that no representative of the Missions in New Guinea sits on the Legislative Council, in spite of their being almost the only people who can talk to the natives in their own language, nor are the natives represented on it at all.

Lord Cromer on Slavery in Egypt.*—II.

THE position of the Slavery question in the wide area of the Egyptian Soudan, which was formerly the happy hunting-ground of the Arab slave-dealer, is other than in Egypt, and the slave trade has, as we know, not yet been wholly suppressed, but much has been done, and Lord Cromer states that domestic slavery is dying a natural death.

Much has been written in the reviews on those chapters of Lord Cromer's first volume (Part III.), which relate to the exciting history of the years 1883 and 1884, just after the author had been appointed British Representative in Cairo, especially with regard to General Gordon's mission and the tragic story of Khartoum. Lord Cromer's narrative, written, as it is, from the most intimate personal knowledge of events, is of absorbing interest, and while much of it deals with political questions, yet the issue of slavery was a very living one at that time, and the somewhat severe criticisms which the author passes upon the action of the Anti-Slavery Society in connection with Soudan affairs, and especially the vexed question of the appointment of Zobeir Pasha, appear to call for some notice.

The first occasion on which the Society protested against Zobeir being sent to the Soudan was in December, 1883, when he was appointed to the command of the Egyptian Army. The Committee memorialised Lord Granville, on the ground of the Pasha's previous character as "head and chief of all the slave-dealers in the Soudan," for which they

* *Modern Egypt*: Macmillan & Co. The first article appeared in the June-July issue.

quoted General Gordon's own account, and in corroboration of which they received strong remonstrances from Dr. Schweinfurth and other qualified persons in Egypt. Zobeir's forces were described as consisting of the worst kind of mob—thieves and men who had lost their character. Was it likely, they asked, that he would forget that the Government had slain his three sons? Would he not join the Mahdi as soon as he reached the Soudan? Lord Cromer is of opinion that the members of the Anti-Slavery Society suffer from "a certain want of imagination" not uncommon in Englishmen dealing with foreign affairs; they sometimes, he says, take a too narrow view of things, and fail to judge accurately of the relative importance of events. In this case he thinks the Society lost sight of the main principle, and should have welcomed any measure which tended to counteract the Mahdi's authority. But the Society's information led them to believe that the appointment of this man would only strengthen the Mahdi. Lord Cromer stigmatises the Society's action in the matter as injudicious and mischievous, and he seems to imply that they meddled in party politics, and urged upon the Government the retention of the Soudan, for he refers to Mr. W. E. Forster as "a leading member of the Anti-Slavery Society," and "the chief of the party of bellicose philanthropy." This implication is not correct. In February, 1884, the Committee declined to sign a petition to the Lord Mayor in favour of holding a Mansion House meeting to protest against giving up the Soudan, as being beyond the province of the Society. In the Anti-Slavery Summary for 1883 it was stated that the loss by Egypt of her Soudan provinces had "demonstrated in the most emphatic manner the impossibility of extinguishing the slave-trade by force of arms," and the *Reporter* for January contained the following editorial statement:—

"At the present extraordinary crisis in the affairs of Egypt we wish to say as little as possible about giving up the Soudan to barbarism and slave-trading. It is a military question, with which we have no right to intermeddle."

Mr. Forster, too, had written to *The Times*, at the close of 1883 that he would not for a moment counsel the re-conquest of the Soudan for the purpose of preventing the slave trade,

"and above all not by an army composed of pariahs and outlaws . . . or of fellahs dragged up in chains and led by Zobeir Pasha, himself the Prince of slave-traders."

The measures which Gordon adopted on reaching the Soudan, especially the proclamation that slave property was not to be interfered with, naturally excited great surprise in this country, as Lord Cromer points out. General Gordon's view, which is endorsed by Lord Cromer, was that the Anti-

Slavery Convention of 1877 could not have been carried out in the Soudan at that time. Assured, therefore, that he was powerless to stop slavery in the future, Gordon, with his usual frankness (which he often carried to unfortunate extremes, as this book shows), "sought," in the words of Lord Cromer, who pleaded for full liberty of action to be given him to carry out his plans, to make "some capital out of permitting the continuance of an abuse" which he could not arrest.

We learn from the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* of March 1884 that, while the Committee viewed some of Gordon's measures as reported, to be unwise and unfortunate, they did not "feel it to be their duty to offer any remarks on these in the absence of further information, with one exception." This exception was of course the repeated request that Zobeir Pasha should be sent out to Khartoum.

On this subject Colonel Stewart had written privately to Sir E. Baring in February begging that, as Gordon who had had an interview with Zobeir in Cairo, and was conscious of "a mystic feeling" in favour of his being sent to the Soudan, was "apparently still hankering after" him and would probably suddenly ask for him to be sent, the Pasha might not be allowed to leave Cairo without very cogent reasons. Colonel Stewart was convinced that his coming would be "a dangerous experiment," and thought it quite possible that he might no longer have the influence attributed to him. General Gordon had himself shortly before wished Zobeir to be sent to Cyprus, but on February 8th he wrote that he was the only man who was fit for Governor General, and felt that the combination of Zobeir and himself was "an absolute necessity for success." Sir E. Baring, who had previously negatived the sending of Zobeir, and then only wished him to succeed Gordon as ruler in Khartoum, but not to be there at the same time, finally supported Gordon's reiterated request on the ground that, with all its objections, there was no alternative policy to be suggested which offered any hope.

The grounds on which the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society unanimously protested against the appointment of Zobeir to the Governorship of the Soudan were his criminal and slave-dealing antecedents, and the belief that the countenance given by the British Government to such a man would be "a degradation for England and a scandal to Europe," which would "stultify the anti-slavery policy which has so long been the high distinction of England." The issue of a "Statement" was authorised (March, 1884) on behalf of the Society, in which a previous appointment of Gordon's of a somewhat similar nature was recalled, which had ended in utter failure. The Society believed that Gordon's wish to appoint Zobeir was due to a like generous impulse, and the Statement ended with the words:—

"It might be considered presumptuous on the part of the Society to point out what should, or should not, be done, in the grave complications which surround General Gordon at Khartoum, and, unassisted as he is, apparently without any prospect of help from England. But, by the light of his writings, surely it seems impossible that the idea of placing Zobeir again in a sphere of active mischief can be entertained."

Lord Cromer discusses the question of Zobeir's appointment in detail with great lucidity, giving the arguments on both sides, and he thus sums up the case:—

"I believe that the final catastrophe at Khartoum might possibly have been averted if Zobeir Pasha had been employed. . . . The main responsibility must be shared . . . by the British Parliament and by the people generally, notably by the Anti-Slavery Society. . . . Nevertheless, even supposing my appreciation of the facts to be correct, it must be admitted that, in a matter of such difficulty, an error of judgment is, to say the least, pardonable."

We confess that, with the information then available, it is difficult to see how the Society could have acted otherwise than they did. Lord Cromer refers in another connection to "the common-place, but extremely true, remark that it is easy to be wise after the event," and we think it applies in this case also.

Not only Colonel Stewart and Lord Cromer had changed their opinions about the advisability of appointing Zobeir, but General Gordon himself had done so. Zobeir had a blood-feud with Gordon, his son having been shot by Gessi Pasha, Gordon's lieutenant, in a revolt in which Zobeir's complicity had been proved.

There was always the risk of Zobeir, if appointed, joining forces with the Mahdi. As Lord Granville in his despatch of March 28th, 1884 pointed out, it seemed too perilous an experiment to let loose in the Soudan a Mussulman of Zobeir's ability, ambition and military skill, and with a grievance against the Egyptian Government. Moreover, might he not use his authority to renew slave raids and purchase the support of his dependents by conniving at their vicious practices?

Lord Northbrook, who was a member of Mr. Gladstone's Government, wrote two years later that to have sent Zobeir would have been "a gambler's cast," the probability being against its success; and, while it is natural after the event to regret that the experiment, which *might possibly* have averted the tragic sequel, was not tried, it is, we think, very difficult to condemn the Anti-Slavery Society under the circumstances for throwing their influence against so desperate a venture as this would admittedly have been.

In an article in the June issue of the *Nineteenth Century* Lord Ribblesdale, who saw a good deal of Zobeir when he was a prisoner at Gibraltar in 1885-6, gives it as his opinion that Zobeir's going to Khartoum to join General Gordon in 1884 "would only have added to the general confusion, and formed a rallying point for fresh and incalculable complications"; and the writer believes that in his heart of hearts the Pasha thought so himself. Although he does not think that Zobeir would have injured Gordon, he says:—

"At the best it was a gamble. In racing parlance, I believe he would have run straight, but that he could not have got the distance; the weight was too much for him."

Letters of Thomas Clarkson.*—VI.

THE proceedings of the Parliamentary Committee of 1842 on West Indian affairs were, as we have seen, not such as to give much satisfaction to Clarkson and his friends. On June 5th he wrote to J. Beaumont, of the Anti-Slavery Society, in a letter from which we have already quoted:—

"I am determined to-morrow, ill as I am, to begin a letter to B. Hawes, as a member of this Committee, in which I will lay before him such points of inquiry as are needed, and prove to him that the negroes are not to be blamed as far as labour, or want of labour, is concerned, and that all the hue and cry of the planters has no just foundation; for the want of labour is owing to themselves, and that the deficiency in point of profits to the planters is owing to their mismanagement of their estates." . . .

"Ill as I am to-day, I will undertake this letter, which may contain about two sheets, at the hazard of my life—of so much importance to the happiness of the poor negroes do I think the report of the Committee."

The writing of the letter in question, he told his correspondent a few days later, had nearly knocked him up.

"I deeply lament it," he continued, "more indeed than I can express, that I can be no more useful to our precious cause by writing another public letter, but I rejoice that I have had thought to write this. Please to read it yourself, and give it to J. Scoble to read, and tell me, without fail, if you both like it; and if you should approve of it, then let our friend J. Scoble present it as soon as possible (not a day is to be lost) to B. Hawes, with my dear and kind regards, for I love the man, though I do not know him. You may tell him that I have devoted fifty-seven years of my life

* The preceding article appeared on p. 107 of Vol. XXVII. (August-October, 1907).

to the cause, and that my opinion is not to be disregarded; though I never was in the West Indies, I have examined, I may say, hundreds of people on the subject who have been there."

He adds in a postscript:—

"I shall be very uneasy and think my letter has miscarried unless I hear from you, after all the pains I have taken and the misery I have gone through, being ill, in writing it."

The letter to Mr. Hawes, above mentioned, pointed out that the difficulties in the islands were not due to the natives, whose conduct was exemplary, but to the wretched and antiquated system of agriculture, and the conservatism, obstinacy and cupidity of the planters. The letter was afterwards expanded into an essay, which was printed as a pamphlet by the Society, with a preface addressed to Lord Stanley, under the title "Not a labourer wanted for Jamaica." This, Clarkson hoped, would act in some degree as "an antidote to the poison which is to emanate from the West Indian Committee." The partiality of the Committee had become evident at an early stage. Only two or three of its members were at once experienced in colonial affairs and disinterested; most of them, it was stated in the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, including the chairman, acted upon a foregone conclusion (the correctness of which they no doubt believed) throughout the proceedings. The consequence was that the West Indians were in constant communication with the chairman, and themselves drafted the questions to be put to their carefully-drilled witnesses, whilst the few witnesses on the opposite side were subjected to a rigorous examination and heard with disfavour. Of the twenty-seven witnesses, twenty were called by the West Indian party, and only three of those proposed by the Anti-Slavery Society were examined, viz., Messrs. Knibb, Candler and J. Scoble; the last of these was, we learn from Clarkson's letters, "insulted by the Committee," and, therefore, refused to give further evidence. Candler seems to have fared little better.

No wonder that Clarkson, who had followed the course of events with unceasing anxiety, often amounting in his letters to nervous irritation, was bitterly disappointed, and wrote at the end of the year that "the late Parliamentary and other proceedings in London last summer were a plot to impose upon the Ministers of the Crown by the planters, which will render them odious to the people of England as well as to the Government."

THE NELSON HACKETT CASE.

In this same year, 1842, Clarkson's indignation was aroused by the surrender of a negro slave, one Nelson Hackett, by the Governor of Canada to the authorities of Arkansas, whence he had escaped, as a

fugitive from justice. About the same time the opponents of slavery were alarmed by an article in a treaty which had been negotiated by the British Minister, Lord Ashburton, with the United States, authorising the delivery by either Government, upon mutual requisitions, of all persons charged with certain crimes, such as murder, arson, robbery, etc., who should be found within the territories of the other. This article, it appeared, might very easily be extended to fugitive slaves, who were always charged by their owners with some offence. The following letter relates to the case of Hackett :—

"June 17th, 1842.

. . . "Yesterday morning I first looked into the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, and saw a fact recorded in it, which in an instant overwhelmed me with sorrow. I allude to the fact of a poor fugitive from oppression in Canada being delivered up to his master. It so affected me that I did not get one wink of sleep the whole night, and I am so jaded and languid to-day, that I know not whether you can read this letter. I have now to ask you whether our Committee will or will not interfere with the Colonial Secretary of State on the occasion. If the precedent be allowed by our Government, what evils will not follow? The whole colony of fugitives may be broken up without a place to go to; you will now have planters not only from Arkansas, but planters in every part of America, from which slaves have fled, coming to claim them. Now, if the slaves are given up, the whole colony will not be only dismayed but broken up, and returned to their cruel owners. Surely it will be proper to call a special Committee to meet on this subject. They may go with confidence to the Secretary of State, with the papers which give the intelligence of the fact, on the ground of the case of the *Creole*; for if the slaves there were liberated because no man could be sent back to slavery who had once set his foot on British soil, neither could this poor slave have been sent back by the Governor, for the same reason, Canada being as much British territory as Nassau; nor does it signify that he has been charged with larceny. All the American planters will put in the same plea of larceny, when the only crime has been that of running away from oppression."

(To be continued.)



DEATH OF MR. C. R. KEMP.

We greatly regret to announce the death on October 1st of Mr. Caleb R. Kemp, who has for 26 years been closely connected with the work of the Anti-Slavery Society, at the age of 72. Mr. Kemp's loss will be deeply felt by the Committee and the Society which he served so wisely and well.

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